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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 108896

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/06/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAL](#) [SY](#) [LE](#) [GM](#)  
SUBJECT: FUTURE U.S. SUPPORT FOR GERMAN-LED BORDER EFFORTS

IN LEBANON

REF: A. BERLIN 1245  
[1](#)B. BEIRUT 1393  
[1](#)C. BEIRUT 932  
[1](#)D. BEIRUT 812

Classified By: Classified by NEA DAS David Hale  
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) This is an action request. Please see paragraph three.

#### SUMMARY

[1](#)2. (C) The United States remains committed to helping Lebanon control its porous border with Syria, but will not contribute directly to the eastward expansion of Germany's mismanaged Northern Border Pilot Project (NBPP). Germany maintains a positive assessment of the NBPP despite two reports of the UN Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team and information from Embassy Beirut as well as British and Lebanese sources on the ground indicating that the NBPP has had little or no effect on security along Lebanon's northern border. We welcome Germany's invitation to provide input into an eastern project, but note Germany has been unresponsive to advice already offered by the United States, United Kingdom, and EU Commission. We will proceed with bilateral border-related assistance to Lebanese security services, probably in cooperation with the United Kingdom, while continuing to coordinate with, but not link our assistance to, German efforts. We urge Germany to adopt previous donor recommendations, reiterated below.

#### OBJECTIVES

[1](#)3. (SBU) Action addressees are requested to pursue the following objectives, drawing upon background information, with German interlocutors responsible for German border assistance to Lebanon. Info addressees may raise these objectives and background information with host-nation interlocutors as appropriate.

-- Thank Germany for its leadership of the NBPP.

-- Underscore our commitment to helping Lebanon control its porous border with Syria in accordance with UNSCR 1701 and our hope that German-led efforts will improve security along the border.

-- Note our assessment, informed by two reports of the UN's Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team as well as sources on the ground in Lebanon, that the NBPP continues to face

logistical, organizational, and political problems, and has had limited impact on security along Lebanon's northern border.

-- Urge Germany to adopt recommendations made previously by the United States and other donors, including direct mentoring of the Common Border Force (CBF), a regular German presence along the border and at the CBF's Common Operations Center (COC), and tighter coordination of equipment and funding donations, as well as recommendations in the NBPP evaluation paper jointly drafted by EC and UK representatives in Lebanon.

-- Note that we plan to coordinate our assistance to Lebanese security forces with Germany's border efforts, but that we do not believe the NBPP model is the best way forward, and that we do not plan to provide funding or equipment directly to a German-led project on the eastern border.

-- Note we will continue to provide bilateral assistance to Lebanese security forces deployed along the border, including equipment such as unmanned aerial vehicles and night-vision devices.

#### REPORTING DEADLINE

14. (U) Posts should report results by cable to NEA/ELA Lebanon Desk Officer Matthew Irwin by Wednesday, October 22.

#### BACKGROUND

15. (C) Despite a widening rift between German and other international donors to the NBPP, German and Lebanese officials have agreed to proceed with an eastern border project, hoping to begin work in mid-2009. German officials in Berlin have already begun the planning process in order to meet a deadline for EU twinning funding, and recently solicited input and funding commitments from the United States (ref A and conversations with German officials in Washington).

16. (C) Embassy Beirut and British contacts blame the NBPP's failure to significantly improve security along Lebanon's northern border on various factors, including limited cooperation between Lebanese security services, local opposition to infringement upon lucrative cross-border smuggling, and a lack of political will in Beirut, but mostly on German mismanagement of the project from its inception. The German implementation team in Lebanon did not coordinate funding and equipment donations, failed to conduct local impact surveys or outreach to border populations, and was inattentive to emerging logistical needs of the CBF and constructive criticism from other donors (refs B, C, and D). In general, NBPP donors have been critical of the German team's "hands-off" approach, including their refusal to spend any significant time with the CBF at their Tripoli headquarters or along the border.

17. (C) We plan to continue our public support for Germany's efforts while maintaining a constructively critical line in private that encourages the adoption of previous recommendations by the UN and NBPP donors. We will also continue our direct support to Lebanese security forces involved in border security. We understand the United Kingdom plans a similar approach (ref B, conversations with British officials in Washington).

RICE